Clarion Review

God Alone is the Truth and the Way
Frederick Mahan
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Three Stars (out of Five)

Prayers for earthly salvation and pleas for our homes and declining fortunes probably increase markedly in hard times like these but Frederick Mahan has a higher goal—he wants each of us to listen to the God inside us not to the devil who drives us to create an ever more sinful culture.

Potential readers may be turned away by Mahan's title but he isn't just preaching another sermon we've heard before. The author devotes the first two-thirds of this book to the evils of our age which are too many to list here. He is most vehement in his criticism of corporate power and greed but his indictments of political corruption and American imperialism are almost as strong.

Some of Mahan's arguments are overly simple but only the most complacent among us would disagree with most of his accusations. He condemns both major political parties and argues that widespread corruption has destroyed any hope of correcting their faults. Ultimately with his belief in the strict construction of the Constitution his political position falls toward the right though he refuses to be called either conservative or liberal.

Mahan carefully catalogues the many flaws in American behavior and their obvious consequences and then marshals arguments from dozens of great thinkers to buttress his position. The Bible is his ultimate authority but to make his point he quotes historians from Gibbon to Toynbee writers from Shakespeare to Dostoevsky and philosophers from Plato to Wittgenstein along with contemporary thinkers of many persuasions.

The son of Lebanese immigrants Mahan sees no way out for Americans except devotion to God. Lifelong study has convinced him that humans have both God and the devil in them and in the US the devil has carried the day. He still believes we should fight back at every opportunity against the evils that beset us but for him there is only one solution which he urges all of us to take: “He who has my commandments and keeps them he it is who loves me; and he who loves me will be loved by my Father and I will love him and manifest myself to him.” (John 14:21)

His route has not been easy but Mahan argues that with study and meditation any of us can follow his path. Anyone who sees no other way out of our difficulties may find this book persuasive. Needless to say Mahan is not the first to come this conclusion and such studies have not always produced the results he suggests—still he strongly asserts that belief in Christ is the only hope.

Carter Jefferson